



California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Coast Region



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Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

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PUBLIC NOTICE AND AVAILABILITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

DRAFT ORDER, MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM, STAFF REPORT AND SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE REGULATION OF WASTE DISCHARGES FROM IRRIGATED LANDS

Date: March 17, 2011

Time: 8:30 AM

Address: 275 Main Street, 4th Floor, Watsonville, CA 95076. Individuals requiring special accommodations are requested to contact Howard Kolb at (805) 549-3332 at least 5 working days prior to the meeting. TTY users may contact the California Relay Service at 1-800-735-2929 or voice line at 1-800-735-2922.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

Central Coast Water Board (Water Board) staff will hold a public meeting to consider adoption of a revised conditional waiver of waste discharge requirements regulating discharges from irrigated lands (Draft Order) and a monitoring and reporting program (MRP) and certification of a subsequent environmental impact report (SEIR). Water Board staff has proposed to renew the current "Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Irrigated Lands" with revisions to control the discharges of wastes, including nitrate, pesticides, and sediment, to surface or ground water and protect beneficial uses of these waters.

The Draft Order and MRP would require owners and operators of irrigated agricultural lands and facilities to control the discharges of waste so they do not violate water quality standards by implementing management practices or operational changes, reporting on progress and effectiveness of practices or operational changes, and monitoring to verify compliance of individual operations with the terms of the Draft Order.

Water quality conditions in agricultural areas of the region are currently degraded or polluted by waste discharges from irrigated agricultural operations and activities that impact aquatic habitat on or near irrigated agricultural operations, including the use of fertilizers and pesticides that run off agricultural fields into surface waters from irrigation water or stormwater or leaches into groundwater. Hundreds of drinking water wells serving thousands of people throughout the Central Coast Region have nitrate levels exceeding the drinking water standard. Many streams are listed as impaired in the Central Coast Region for nutrients and pesticides, toxicity (from pesticides), or sediment, on the Clean Water Act section 303(d) List of Impaired Waterbodies.

California Environmental Protection Agency



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In-stream aquatic habitat has been impaired by riparian vegetation removal that eliminates filtering of chemicals as they runoff from fields, and/or causes increases in temperatures to levels harmful for organisms and fish.. The SEIR identifies that compliance with the Draft Order could, but is not likely to, result in potentially significant adverse environmental effects on biological resources due to reduced flows in some water bodies.

Currently, irrigated agricultural dischargers (owners and operators) are required to enroll in an existing Order to control waste discharges. The Water Board is considering a revised order to better address the current degraded conditions.

SUBMITTAL OF COMMENTS

The deadline for comments on the Draft Order, MRP, and SEIR is **January 3, 2011**. Please email comments to AgOrder@waterboards.ca.gov with "Ag Order Comment" in the subject line of the email, or mail comments to 895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-7906, attention Howard Kolb, Agricultural Order Project Lead Staff.

The Draft Order, MRP, SEIR, and staff report are posted at the website below. Documents are also available by request at the office of the Central Coast Water Board.
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/ag_waivers/ag_order.shtml

Water Board staff will address significant comments in the final documents that will be provided to the Water Board at the hearing planned for March 17, 2011.

TO RECEIVE AGRICULTURAL ORDER RENEWAL INFORMATION

To receive Agricultural Order Renewal information, please subscribe to the Agricultural Discharges electronic mailing list at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg3_subscribe.shtml

Interested persons may also request to have Agricultural Order Renewal information hardcopies via U. S. Mail using the contact information below. Persons who subscribe to the electronic mailing list or who request a hard copy of information will be included in the Interested Persons List and will receive future notices of Water Board activities; those that do not make such a request will not be included on the list.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions regarding the Draft Order, MRP, SEIR, and staff report should be directed to Angela Schroeter, Agricultural Regulatory Program Manager, at (805) 542-4644 or to Lisa McCann, Watershed Protection Section Manager, at (805) 549-3132.

cc: Interested Parties List Agricultural Order
File: Agricultural Order Renewal

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